

International Theatre Institute ITI

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“Today, as I see the world moving towards unification I am convinced that peace has become an even greater necessity for humanity. For us, the world to be created must be one of understanding and harmony so that it may reach its fulfillment without division or discord. It must be a world in which uniformity has given way to the creative diversity which is the very essence of our being. This can only come about through mutual acceptance of one another. Only the spirit of open-mindedness and understanding in each of our encounters will enable us to protect each one's personality and uniqueness.

During the twentieth century, humanity has made striking progress in material and technical fields, bringing about radical changes in our society. But we know that poverty and hunger still exist and we still see wars and conflicts continuing everywhere.

Our sense of powerlessness in the face of this sad reality sometimes leads us to despair.

What can we do? What can the theatre do?

The tragic situation in which we find ourselves is the fruit of narrow dogmatism and intolerance. We think that the theatre can be one means of healing for this illness.

This is why we believe more in the importance of listening closely to the words of actors in the theatre than to speeches made by politicians and scholarly theoreticians. We hope in this way to see the tragic situation of the twentieth century transformed in such away as to enable the twenty-first century to fulfill its true potential - to see a world that has become inhuman evolve into one that is more altruistic and generous.

I used to think I lived at the outer limits of the world. Up until the nineteenth century, Korea was among the most isolated countries in the world, situated as it was in a remote and rather inaccessible region of the Orient.

Today, in 1997, it is in this far-off part of the Far East that performing artists from all over the world will come together for the 27th World Congress of the International Theatre Institute. Through this encounter, Seoul our capital, which was for so long cut off from the rest of the world, will become the new CENTRE of world dramatic art. This encounter of universal dimensions could in its turn encourage the birth of other new CENTRES. In a unified world, each city and each nation could become such a CENTRE, and the notion of Orient and Occident, along

with that of North and South would thus become no longer relevant. This world in which the division of South and North, East and West no longer exists, this world in which the CENTRE may be found in each city and in each nation, this world would no longer be subject to the reign of narrow dogmatism and intolerance but would be a world living in the creative diversity and originality of each person.

Do not let us forget that our preparations for the new millennium must lead to the creation of a new world. "